

*Custer County - Idaho  
Wildland/Urban  
Interface Fire Mitigation Plan*



*Review and Update  
June 2008*

# CUSTER COUNTY IDAHO WILDLAND/URBAN INTERFACE FIRE MITIGATION PLAN UPDATE 2008

## PROMULGATION OF ADOPTION

Be it known that the Custer County Idaho Board of County Commissioners do hereby approve the Adoption of the Custer County Idaho Wildland/Urban Interface Fire Mitigation Plan Review and Update dated June 2008 and direct its implementation through the Custer County Wildland/Urban Interface Advisory Committee, Mr. Doug Hammond, Chairman.

This Plan has been developed, evaluated, and updated in the interest of providing fire mitigation protection to populations living in the wildland/urban interface. Through adoption of this Plan Update, all county and private agencies are requested to continue to develop directives, Standard Operating Procedures, checklists or other supplemental guidance to insure its maximum effectiveness.

  
CUSTER COUNTY COMMISSIONER REPRESENTATIVE

6-9-08  
DATE

  
RURAL FIRE DEPARTMENT REPRESENTATIVE

6-9-08  
DATE

  
IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF LANDS

6/10/08  
DATE



# ***Custer County - Idaho***

## **Wildland/Urban Interface Fire Mitigation Plan**

**Review and Update**

**June 2008**



# Executive Summary

Wildfires are a part of the natural ecological cycle of forest ecosystems. However, as humans encroach onto forested lands, the risk of catastrophic disaster increases. These areas of risk are known as the wildland/urban interface. They can be sharp geographical edges or zones of ever increasing risk potential. Regardless, they pose a threat to human life and property. The National Fire Plan calls for reducing this risk through a variety of measures including the creation of local wildland/urban interface fire mitigation programs. In 2003 Custer County Emergency Management received a grant through the High Country Resource Conservation and Development Program (RC&D) to prepare the Wildland/Urban Interface Fire Mitigation Plan that documents programmatic goals, identifies implementing actions, and sets priorities for reducing wildfire risk.

The Plan was completed and issued in 2004. Under the direction of the County Board of Commissioners and the Director of Custer County Emergency Management this Plan was reviewed and updated during the fall of 2005 and provided for adoption by the County Board of Commissioners during December 2005. This Plan was again reviewed and update during the spring of 2008. The Plan Update does not replicate all information provided in the initial planning effort, but rather provides updates in appropriate sections such as the hazard analysis and focuses primarily on the review of existing mitigation actions, adds new actions, and provides a status of ongoing activities.

Initially a project Interagency Planning Group (IPG) assembled to guide the process of developing the Plan. In addition three public meetings were conducted to gather information that was used to assess the natural hazard and resulting actions outlined further in the body of the Plan. The final meeting of the IPG was held on February 6, 2004. Continued follow up is being lead by the Custer County Wildland Advisory Committee lead by the Director of Custer County Emergency Management. This Plan evaluation and update was conducted as required and under their direction.

The **Four Key Issues** identified initially be the IPC continue to be the primary focus of this effort.

- ☐ **Reduce Fire Loading**
- ☐ **Improve Equipment**
- ☐ **Increase available water storage**
- ☐ **Develop Zoning and Building Codes**

The Custer County Wildland/Urban Fire Mitigation Program is entering its third year and continues to promote public policy designed to protect citizens, critical facilities, infrastructure, private property, and the environment from Wildfires. This mission is being achieved by partnering with federal agencies to increase public awareness, documenting the resources for risk reduction and loss-prevention, and identifying activities that are moving the county towards building/maintaining a safer, more sustainable community.

## **Hazard, Vulnerability, and Risk Assessment**

The original hazard analyses conducted as part of the IPG mitigation planning effort identified the largest wildfire risks within the wildand/urban interface areas in Custer County as the SNRA/private subdivision areas. The largest threat to life continues to be the recreation sites such as Red Fish Lake, but certainly the highest property loss would occur within the privately owned subdivisions where loss of life could also be significant. Another serious risk area is the Riparian Zone below the Mackay Reservoir along the Big Lost River. The conditions within this area are not as well managed as the SNRA's and SCF's Red Tree treatment areas. The Federal Government does not have ultimate responsibility for the treatment program and so the County and homeowners may well have to face this risk alone.












## Five Year Action Plan

Specific implementing and ongoing actions comprised the *Custer County Wildland/Urban Interface Fire Mitigation Fire Year Plan*. Additional short and long term implementing actions were categorized in Section 5 of the Plan into the following categories:

- ☐ Establish Partnerships
- ☐ Funding Needs
- ☐ Education and Training
- ☐ Data Collection

Implementation has occurred as funding and resources are made available.

The tables below provide current status of implementing activities that county and federal agencies and private property owners have taken over the past year to reduce risk.

Existing Actions		 In Progress
1.	Revision of the Custer County Emergency Operations Plan into the NIMS format.	
2.	Installation of static water supply tanks in Stanley.	
3.	SNRA Red Tree Reduction Project.	
4.	Fuel Reduction Projects in the Iron Creek, Crooked Creek, Cow Camp, Basin Creek, Fisher Creek, and Buckhorn Subdivisions. Project includes thinning, removal and replanting of dead lodgepole pine.	
5.	Rural Addressing of Custer County.	
6.	Mechanical and prescribed burning to conduct fuels reduction in the dead and dying stands of trees northeast of Lower Stanley, around the Camp Bradley Boy Scout Camp, the Cape Horn Power Line, ranch, and egress/ingress roads. The SCF is also taking action to salvage dead and dying trees in Harden Creek and reducing fuels in the municipal watershed for Challis.	
7.	Procurement of new fire apparatus in South and North Custer Fire Districts.	
Short Term Actions		 In Progress
<b>Develop Partnerships</b>		
1.	Establish subcommittees to investigate and lead the implementation of mitigation projects.	
2.	Identify all organizations within Custer County that have programs or interests in wildland/urban interface fire mitigation including private business and other joint planning groups and investigate if common issues are being addressed. Invite them to assist in the implementation mitigation projects.	
3.	Develop, approve and promote Fire Protection Agreements and	

Short Term Actions	✗ In Progress
partnerships to clarify roles and responsibilities and to provide for fire mitigation activities and suppression preparedness.	✗
4. Develop partnerships with Water Districts to improve the water storage facilities and delivery capabilities in development within and outside of Fire Protection Districts.	
5. Integrate requirements for water drafting into Annual Operating Plans developed between the Fire Districts and the Federal Agencies.	
6. Revise the Hazard/Vulnerability Analysis to include a definition of the WUI Zone, develop maps depicting the zones, analyze slope and vegetation.	✗
<b>Education and Training:</b>	
1. Provide training for Advisory Committee members on current and developing issues related to the wildland/urban interface fire hazards loss reduction field.	
2. Develop a brochure that addresses fire and relating watershed issues in the wildland/urban interface that can be used by the general public and private businesses.	✗
3. Encourage the development of unifying organizations to ensure communications and dissemination of the wildland/urban interface mitigation information such as planned programs and results from mitigation actions.	✗
4. Develop the capability to apply for grant funding for the implementation of mitigation actions through training of grant writers and the monitoring of available grant opportunities.	✗
5. Conduct joint training and exercises between the Fire Districts, the Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, and SNRA to improve communications and coordination during fire suppression.	✗
6. Provide public education of the need to improve water storage and distribution capacity within the County including improved mapping of existing water storage.	
7. Improve knowledge of causes and effects of landslides resulting from wildfires including hazards vulnerabilities, and risks to life and property in hazard prone areas.	
8. Enhance outreach and education programs aimed at interface fire hazards through cooperation with existing programs within the Forest Service, BLM, and State Department of Lands.	✗
<b>Data Collection:</b>	
1. Working within the partnerships created above, gather information and propose the development of building codes and a permit process to ensure that defensible space has been properly planned for in new construction.	
2. As part of the Rural Addressing Project, identify critical facilities, such as wireless communications repeaters and bridges used for evacuation, within the interface areas at risk from wildfire events.	



**Short Term Actions****X In Progress**

3. Assess bridges and roadways for their ability to support fire apparatus ingress and egress.
4. Map and evaluate the landslide prone areas of the county for possible land movements.

**Specific Implementing Actions Projects:**

1. Implement Section 7 of the Wildland/Urban Interface Fire Mitigation Plan through Plan adoption and Advisory Committee establishment. X
2. Implement re-vegetation programs in landslide areas affected by previous wildfires.
3. Develop and disseminate maps showing the fire hazard to help in the education and preparedness of the community. Use the GIS layers developed as part of the Rural Addressing Project.
4. Complete the Rural Addressing Project.
5. Improve fire protection ratings in Stanley through the construction of a new fire station and improvements in water storage and distribution. X  
X
6. Improve fire protection ratings in Mackay, the South Custer Fire District, the City of Challis, and North Custer Fire District through the construction of a new fire station and improvements in the water storage and delivery infrastructure such as dry hydrants, portable tankers, underground, draft capable, tanks, private property access, and other required fire fighting equipment. X
7. Continue to assist homeowner associations to apply for grants for the purposes of reducing fuel loading and improvements in fire protection infrastructure. X
8. Conduct workshops for public and private sector organizations to raise awareness of mitigation activities and programs.
9. Place the Custer County Wildland/Urban Interface Fire Mitigation Plan on the County Web Site.
10. Implement the SNRA Community Evacuation Plan.
11. Develop Evacuation Plans for sites along the Custer Motorway Adventure Road including the historical sites along the Yankee Fork of the Salmon River.
12. Plan and/or implement fuels reduction projects in the North Fork of the Big Lost River, Sawmill Canyon, in the East Fork of the Salmon River, Squaw/Kinnickinic Creeks, Poverty Flats and in the municipal watersheds of Challis and Mackay. X

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**Long Term and Ongoing Actions**
**✗ In Progress**
**Establish Partnerships:**

1. Coordinate the maintenance of emergency transportation routes through communications with the County Interagency Transportation Working Group and neighboring jurisdictions.
2. Work with community planning organizations and other neighborhood groups to establish Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT).
3. Develop Quick Response Units for medical response in sparsely populated areas.
4. Develop Memoranda of Understanding with existing Emergency Medical Services in the County to increase coverage.

**Funding Needs/Support:**

1. Purchase and equip a mobile command unit to improve emergency response communications between public agencies, response entities, and the County Emergency Operations Center.
2. Hire a County Fire Prevention Officer to oversee public education programs.
3. Develop a structured Fire Prevention Education Program based on the community hazards.
4. Develop and equipment additional Emergency Medical Services Organizations in areas not covered.
5. Rural Fire Departments need to upgrade their rural water supplies and capabilities. This would include portable pumps, tankers and pumps for filling them, drop tanks and PPEs.

**Education and Training**

1. Educate private property owners on limitations of physical infrastructure and dangers associated with them following wildfire events.
2. Develop a process to encourage private property owners to upgrade their bridges and roadways to support ingress and egress of fire apparatus.
3. Encourage individual and family preparedness through public education projects such as safety fairs and fire prevention month.
4. Develop or enhance existing outreach materials to include focus on protecting natural ecosystems and watersheds as a mitigation activity.
5. Improve training for existing Emergency Medical Services.

**Data Collection:**

1. Conduct risk analysis incorporating data and hazard mapping using GIS technology to identify vulnerable sites and to further assist in the prioritization of mitigation activities.
2. Identify watersheds and develop a watershed protection program.


✗

✗



## Long Term and Ongoing Actions

 In Progress

### Specific Implementation Projects:

1. Employ mechanical thinning and prescribe burning in Red Tree Areas.
2. Clear trimmings, trees, brush, and other debris completely from sites when performing routine maintenance and landscaping to reduce fire risk
3. Expand Fire Districts to provide fire protection to residences within the County. 
4. Plan and/or implement Fuels Reduction Projects in the municipal watersheds of Mackay (Rio Grande, Taylor, Cliff, Black Daisy and Alder Creeks) and Challis (Garden and Daugherty Creeks) as well as the Big Hill area, Morgan Summit Salvage, Cape Horn Meadows, Big Gulch, Dead Cat, Mosquito Lake, Copper Basin Front, Twin Bridges, Harden Road, Sulfur/Morgan, Upper Yankee Fork, and around recreation residences, resorts and organization camps on the SNRA. These projects are in or adjacent to municipal watersheds, in the response to dying stands of trees, or are near subdivisions and other private lands.

### Ongoing Actions:

1. Encourage single-family residences to have fire plans and practice evacuation routes.
2. Encourage fire inspections in residential areas by fire departments to increase awareness and establish relationships between homeowners and firefighters.
3. Continue the development of adult and child education programs and incorporate them into the public libraries, community service groups, the media, and other civic forums. 
4. Continue to update and improve the SNRA Community Evacuation Plan. 
5. Improve Fire District capabilities through an aggressive program focusing on resources acquisition, training, and coordination.
6. Fuels reduction projects are ongoing in the municipal watershed for Challis and in Morgan, Harden, Kelly, Basin and Taylor Creeks, as well as in Joe's Gulch and Eddy Basin.
7. Weed treatments and site rehabilitation is ongoing on the lands administered by the Challis Field Office BLM to reduce cheatgrass and increase native grasses (changes flammability of fuels).
8. Continue partnerships between federal agencies and Salmon River Electric Coop for line transmission clearing.

The Board of County Commissioners (BCC) is responsible for adopting the Updated Custer County Wildland/Urban Interface Mitigation Plan. The Advisory Committee, working with private property holders, is responsible for coordinating implementation of additional Plan actions and undertaking the formal evaluation process. The Plan will continue to be evaluated on an annual basis to determine the effectiveness of programs,

provide status on implementation actions, and to reflect changes in land development or programs that may affect mitigation priorities.

Custer County is dedicated to involving the public directly in the continual review and updates of the Wildland/Urban Interface Fire Mitigation Plan. Copies of the plan will be catalogued and kept at all of the public libraries in the county. The existence and location of these copies will be publicized annually, following each annual review of the plan, in the local area newspaper.

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# Section 1: Introduction and Planning Process

Wildfires are a part of the natural ecological cycle of forest ecosystems. However, as humans encroach onto forested lands, the risk of catastrophic disaster increases. These areas of risk are known as the wildland/urban interface. They can be sharp geographical edges or zones of ever increasing risk potential. Regardless, they pose a threat to human life and property. The National Fire Plan calls for reducing this risk through a variety of measures including the creation of local wildland/urban interface fire mitigation programs. In 2003 Custer County Emergency Management received a grant through the High Country Resource Conservation and Development Program (RC&D) to prepare the Wildland/Urban Interface Fire Mitigation Plan that documents programmatic goals, identifies implementing actions, and sets priorities for reducing wildfire risk. The Plan was completed and issued in 2004. Under the direction of the County Board of Commissioners and the Director of Custer County Emergency Management this Plan was reviewed and updated as required during the fall of 2005 and provided for adoption by the County Board of Commissioners during December 2005. The Plan Update does not replicate all information provided in the initial planning effort, but rather provides updates in appropriate sections such as the hazard analysis and focuses primarily on the review of existing mitigation actions, adds new actions, and provides a status of ongoing activities.

## Wildfire Hazard Mitigation

Wildfire hazard mitigation is the development and implementation of activities designed to reduce or eliminate losses resulting from wildfires. Wildfire mitigation can be used in conjunction with other county plans, including the County Comprehensive Land Use and Emergency Operations Plans.

The Custer County Wildland/Urban Interface Fire Mitigation Plan, hereafter referred to as the Plan, addresses privately held unincorporated urban and rural areas of the county and their interface points with Federal or State Lands such as the Salmon Challis National Forest, the Sawtooth National Recreation Area. While this Plan does not establish requirements for the cities in the county or the Federal or State held lands, it does provide them with a framework for planning for common impacts from wildfires. The resources and background information in the plan is applicable countywide, and the goals and recommendations lay groundwork for local mitigation plans and partnerships.

All mitigation is local, and the primary responsibility for development and implementation of risk reduction strategies and policies lies with local jurisdictions. Local jurisdictions, however, are not alone. Partners and resources exist at the state and federal levels. No plan is complete until it is implemented. This Plan describes prescriptive programmatic actions that will bring about mitigation. These mitigation actions, if implemented over the next several years, will help reduce the damages caused by wildfire in the wildland/urban interface. However, it is up to the community to ensure that these actions are taken.

## Background

Most Counties within the state have developed a simple Wildland/Urban Interface Fire Mitigation Plan. These plans as well as the Custer County WUI Plan are required to contain at least the following five elements:

- 1) Documentation of the process used to develop the mitigation plan. How the plan was developed, who was involved and how the public was involved.
- 2) A risk assessment to identify vulnerabilities to wildfire in the wildland urban interface (WUI).
- 3) A prioritized mitigation strategy that addresses each of the risks. Examples of these strategies could be:
  - ☐ Training for fire departments
  - ☐ Public education
  - ☐ Hazardous fuel treatments
  - ☐ Equipment
  - ☐ Communications

- ☐ Additional planning
- ☐ New facilities
- ☐ Infrastructure improvements
- ☐ Code and/or ordinance revision
- ☐ Volunteer efforts
- ☐ Evacuation plans, etc.

4) A process for maintenance of the plan, which includes monitoring, and evaluation of mitigation activities.

5) Documentation that the plan has been formally adopted by the involved agencies.

In Custer County existing assessments and planning documentation have fulfilled many of the recommendations made above however, the purpose of the initial planning activity was to integrate existing relevant information into a single place and to develop a strategic pathway to fire mitigation implementation.

### **Project Requirements**

The Plan has been written to establish the jurisdiction's commitment to reduce risks from disasters and technological hazards, and serve as a guide for decision-makers as they commit resources to reduce the effects of wildfires upon private property within the designated wildland/urban interface areas.

The Plan has been developed in accordance with the request from the State of Idaho Bureau of Homeland Security to cover the following format.

1. Develop and Document Planning Process
2. Assess the Risk
3. Develop Mitigation Strategies
4. Develop a Maintenance Process for the Plan

### **Meetings**

Three planning meetings were conducted to gather information and develop natural hazard actions for this plan. Additional meetings will be held with the County Commission, homeowners and the general public during the month of January.

Date	Group	Purpose
2/25/05	LEPC Meeting	Discuss Review and Update of Plan
11/2/05	LEPC Meeting	Evaluate and Review Plan Update
12/13/05	LEPC Meeting	Accept Review and Update of Plan

### **Mitigation Alternatives**

The Five Year (*implementation*) Action Plan resulting from the initial planning and subsequent reviews is the most important product developed by the process. The Five Year Action Plan contained in Section 5 identifies who is responsible for implementation of the action, what resources are required for implementation, when the implementation is expected to be complete, and current status of actions taken to implement the mitigation activity.

### **Plan Update Adoption**

The Custer County Board of County Commissioners is responsible for adopting the updates and revisions to the Plan. Once the Plan has been adopted, the County Emergency Management Director is responsible for submitting it to the State Hazard Mitigation Officer at the Idaho Bureau of Homeland Security who will then submit the plan to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for information and review. This review will assess how the plan meets the federal criteria outlined in FEMA Interim Final Rule 44 CFR Part

201. Upon acceptance by FEMA, Custer County will gain eligibility for Wildfire Mitigation Grant Program funds. A formal Plan Update adoption form is included as the first page of the Plan.

### **Advisory Committee**

The Advisory Committee is comprised of the following and has been responsible for coordinating the implementing the Five Year Action Plan and has undertaken this formal review process. The Advisory Committee will meet regularly to continue to examine opportunities to implement specific mitigation actions and to take and evaluate the implementation process.

Name	Representing
Cliff Hansen	Custer County Commissioner
Lin Hintze	Custer County Commissioner
Wayne Butts	Custer County Commissioner
Doug Hammond	Custer County Disaster Coordinator
Randy Ivie	City of Mackay Fire Chief
Will Marcroft	US Forest Service Lost River FMO
John Fowler	USFS – South Zone Fuels Spec
Bill Baer	Challis BLM
Fritz Cluff	Salmon BLM
Launna Gunderson	Challis Fire
Andy Gunderson	Sawtooth Valley Rural Fire Department
Rochelle Ahrens	Sawtooth N.F. Prevention

Subcommittees may be formed under the direction of the Advisory Committee, to further evaluate actions as established and categorized in Section 5. Recommendations will then be made as to specific implementation processes including acquisition of funding and other necessary resources.



## Section 2: Custer County Idaho

The rising cost of disasters has led to a renewed interest in identifying effective ways to reduce vulnerability to wildfires. Wildland/urban interface fire mitigation planning assists communities in reducing risk from wildfires by identifying resources, information, and strategies for risk reduction, while helping to guide and coordinate mitigation activities throughout the county

### Program Mission

The mission of the Custer County Wildland/Urban Fire Mitigation Program is to promote public policy designed to protect citizens, critical facilities, infrastructure, private property, and the environment from Wildfires. This can be achieved by increasing public awareness, documenting the resources for risk reduction and loss-prevention, and identifying activities to guide the county towards building a safer, more sustainable community.

### Program Goals

The Custer County Wildland/Urban Fire Mitigation Program establishes goals that describe the overall direction that Custer County agencies, organizations, and citizens are taking to work toward mitigating wildland/urban interface risks from wildfires. The goals continue as stepping-stones between the broad direction of the mission statement and the specific recommendations outlined in the implementing actions.

### Protect Life and Property

- ❑ Implement activities that assist in protecting lives by making homes, businesses, infrastructure, critical facilities, and other property more resistant to losses from wildfire hazards.
- ❑ Reduce losses and repetitive damages for chronic hazard events while promoting insurance coverage for catastrophic hazards.
- ❑ Improve hazard assessment information to make recommendations the creation of County wide zoning and building codes and standards for new developments and encouraging preventative measures for existing development in areas vulnerable to wildfire hazards.

### Public Awareness

- ❑ Develop and implement education and outreach programs to increase public awareness of the risks associated with wildfire hazards.
- ❑ Provide information on tools, partnership opportunities, and funding resources to assist in implementing mitigation actions.

### Natural Systems

- ❑ Balance watershed planning, natural resource management, and land use planning with wildfire mitigation to protect life, property, and the environment.
- ❑ Preserve, rehabilitate, and enhance natural systems to serve wildfire mitigation functions.

### Partnerships and Implementation

- ❑ Strengthen communication and coordinate participation among and within public agencies, citizens, non-profit organizations, business, and industry to gain a vested interest in implementation.
- ❑ Encourage leadership within public and private sector organizations to prioritize and implement local, county, and regional hazard mitigation actions.

### Emergency Services

- ❑ Establish policy to ensure mitigation projects for critical facilities, services, and infrastructure
- ❑ Strengthen emergency operations by increasing collaboration and coordination among public agencies, non-profit organizations, business, and industry.

- Coordinate and integrate wildfire mitigation activities, where appropriate, with emergency operations plans and procedures.



## Section 3: Hazard/Vulnerability and Risk Assessment

The following section provides information on wildfires and how they may affect the Custer County's ability to respond. This initial assessment is the baseline for developing a more in-depth disaster data tracking system, which will provide a more accessible and accurate profile for risk assessments in the future. .

### Hazard Assessment

#### Sawtooth National Recreation Area

The Sawtooth National Recreation Area (SNRA) has been experiencing severe drought conditions for several years throughout the forest. The mountain pine beetle epidemic in the Sawtooth Valley and Stanley Basin and the high number of homes in the wildland/urban interface increase the potential for large wildfires that put community and firefighter safety at risk. In addition, there is high public usage in this area and abandoned campfires were one of the main ignition causes in 2002. The long-term fire weather forecast is predicted to remain hot and dry, with the possibility of extreme fire behavior.

Large areas of the SNRA, as well as a portion of the Yankee Fork Ranger District of the Salmon/Challis National Forest, continue to experience significant increases in hazardous fuel loading, primarily created from a very active attack of Mountain Pine Beetle (MPB). In some areas, nearly 70-80% of the lodgepole pine trees are dead or dying. This is a naturally occurring phenomenon, brought about by successive years of drought coupled with a "short-lived" species of trees that has reached and exceeded the age of maturity.

#### Salmon Challis National Forest

The Wildland/Urban Interface Fire Management Unit within the Salmon Challis National Forest is 626,450 acres in size and is scattered across the Forest primarily along river and stream corridors. It covers areas in both Lemhi and Custer Counties. Included within the unit are areas bordering the Salmon River, Owl Creek, Panther Creek, Napias Creek, Silver Creek, Spring Creek, Indian Creek, North Fork of the Salmon River, Sheep Creek, Dahlenoga Creek, Fourth of July Creek, Hayden Creek, Big Timber Creek, Little Timber Creek, Williams Creek, Williams Lake, Morgan Creek, Challis Creek, Garden Creek, Pass Creek, Wet Creek, Big Lost River, East Fork of the Big Lost River, Rio Grand Canyon and Antelope Creek.

Lands within or in close proximity to this Fire Management Unit are classified as Wildland Urban interface areas. Included are the at risk communities identified by the State of Idaho as a part of the National Fire Plan as well as other communities and developed areas that qualified as Wildland Urban Interface and Wildland urban intermix communities using the Forest Wildland Urban Interface definition. The specified suppression strategy for fires occurring within this area is full suppression. Fire management direction comes from either the Challis National Forest or Salmon National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan.

#### Big Lost Drainage

Severe Drought has significantly impacted the Big Lost Drainage. Even though the Big Lost Drainage experienced a slightly higher runoff season riparian lands along the Big Lost River have been severely impacted due to previous low stream flows during the ongoing drought. Naturally occurring vegetation has died leaving dead trees and brush within the Riparian Zones below Mackay Reservoir.

Private Lands, held along the Big Lost River, are vulnerable to Wildfires within the Riparian Zone. There has been a significant increase in construction of homes within the Riparian Zone within the past 10 years. These homes are surrounded with high levels of fuel due to the dead and dying trees and natural vegetation. The South Custer and Big Lost Fire Districts provide fire Suppression within the Big Lost River Riparian Zone.

#### Drought

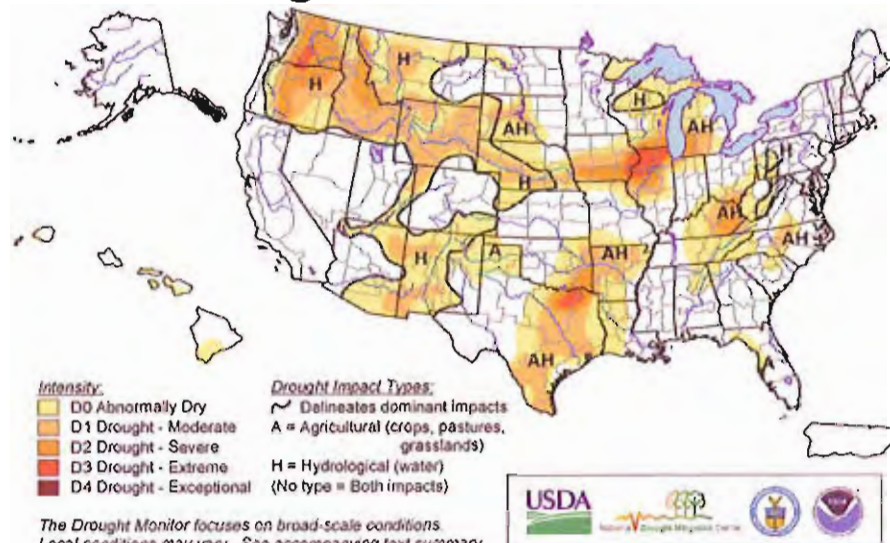
Drought conditions have existed in Custer County since 1999. The County Commissioners requested a Drought Disaster Declaration from the Idaho Department of Water Resources in April 2001, which was approved by Governor Dirk Kempthorne. The County has been under declaration status since that time with the declaration renewed annually by the Governor. Custer County's declaration was renewed on March 28, 2005 by the Governor.

According to the National Weather Service it is expected that in the drought will continue with below normal snow pack below normal water supplies. See the Figures below for current drought condition throughout United States and for 2006 Drought Condition Forecast.

## U.S. Drought Monitor

October 25, 2005

Valid 8 a.m. EDT



Released Thursday, October 27, 2005

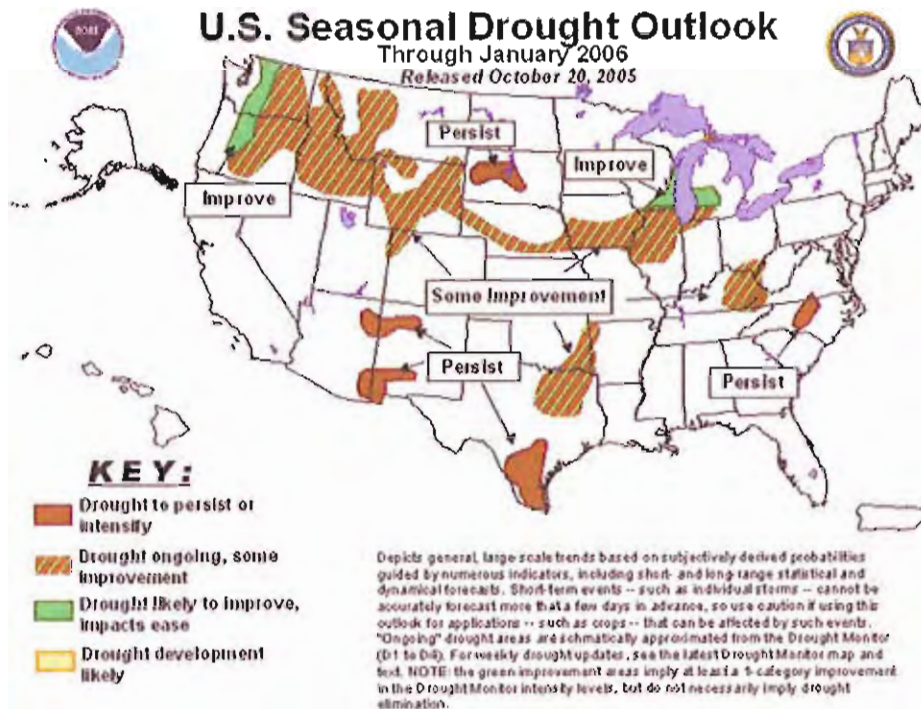
Author: C. Tankersley/L. Love-Brotak, NOAA/NESDIS/NCDC

<http://drought.unl.edu/dm>

## U.S. Seasonal Drought Outlook

Through January 2006

Released October 20, 2005



## Landslide

*Landslides* occur when masses of rock, earth, or debris move down a slope. *Debris flows*, also known as *mudslides*, are a common type of fast-moving landslide that tends to flow in channels. Landslides are caused by disturbances in the natural stability of a slope. They can accompany heavy rains or follow droughts, earthquakes, or volcanic eruptions. Mudslides develop when water rapidly accumulates in the ground and results in a surge of water-saturated rock, earth, and debris. Mudslides usually start on steep slopes and can be activated by natural disasters. Areas where wildfires or human modification of the land have destroyed vegetation on slopes are particularly vulnerable to landslides during and after heavy rains.

Landslides resulting from the removal of vegetation during a wildfire incident are common. The most vulnerable area within Custer County for damage due to landslides is the Salmon River Corridor from Stanley to Challis and beyond into Lemhi County along State Highway 75. This area is currently within the “Red Tree” treatment area discussed above. Work to remove dead and dying lodgepole pine along the Salmon River Corridor is underway however; the process is difficult because of the increasing requirements brought about by the Clean Water Act and issues related to fisheries.

## Vulnerability Assessment

A vulnerability assessment identifies areas in the county that may be affected, individuals in the county who may be subject to injury or death, and what facilities, property, or environment may be susceptible to damages should a wildfire occur.

### Electrical Power:

The Salmon River Electric Cooperative (SREC) transmission system has only one line into Custer County with limited redundancy outside of the county. This situation, while usually reliable, is very vulnerable to wildfires. For example, in July of 2003 a wildfire on the Idaho National Engineering Laboratory damaged power lines running from the Goshen Substation, near Idaho Falls, to Custer County. The County experienced two power outages as a result of the line damage, one on the 27<sup>th</sup> lasting 5 hours and one on the 28<sup>th</sup> lasting 3 hours. A map of the electrical supply system for Custer County is included in Appendix 12. As experience in July 2003, a wildfire anywhere between the Goshen substation and Custer County as the “end of the line” has a potential to interrupt electrical power.

### Transportation Routes:

The main transportation routes through Custer County are U. S. Highway 93 and State Highways 75 and 21. These highways are two-way, opposing traffic roadways. The highest times of use are in the summer months during the tourism season. While U. S. Highway 93 essentially traverses the open valleys of Custer County between Mackay and Challis, it crosses the Big Lost River riparian zone between Mackay and Leslie. This riparian area has a high concentration of dead trees and vegetation.

Highway 75 follows the Salmon River from Stanley to Challis and then into Lemhi County. The highway between Stanley and Challis winds through narrow river gorges filled with dead and dying lodgepole pines as described above. A wildland fire, or a resulting landslide, could easily close this major east/west corridor. Highway 75 leaves Stanley and turns south through the heart of the SNRA into Blaine County.

Highway 21 comes from the North into Stanley through the SNRA and passes through designated Red Tree treatment areas as well and has the same vulnerabilities as highway 75.

Many of the improved roads in the County leave the main arteries described above to reach into remote areas within the confines of the two national forests. These roads, for the most part, end as unimproved roadways. Discussion within the Interagency Planning Group has focused on the width of these roadways, the narrow bridges, and lack of clearances for fire apparatus. Additionally there is concern that evacuation from high mountain areas, recreations areas, and in many instances, housing subdivisions have a single access road that could easily be blocked by wildfire or landslides.

## **Recreation Sites:**

There are several significant recreation sites within Custer County. The most frequently mentioned area of concern is Red Fish Lake, the Red Fish Lake Lodge, and the Red Fish Lake Camp grounds and trail heads. Other areas include but are not limited to, Eddy Lake, Copper Basin, and campgrounds along the Salmon River. The SNRA has developed some evacuation plans for the Red Fish Lake Area. These areas are of significant risk due to the high fuel loading, the continued drought, and the high instance of visitation by the general public.

## **Custer Idaho and the Custer Motorway Adventure Road**

In 1966, the Challis National Forest took ownership of the few remaining building of Custer, Idaho. Established in 1870s along the Yankee Fork of the Salmon River, this City was home to gold miners and other adventures. The City, essentially a ghost town, was placed on the National Registry of Historic Places. In 1990, the Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation joined the Forest Service in managing Custer. This led to the establishment of the "Land of the Yankee Fork" State and National Forest Historic Area.

Additional Historic Sites along the Custer Motorway Adventure Road include the City of Challis, Cartwright Gulch, Corkscrew Grand and Slab Barn, Greenwood Station, Tollgate Station, Homestead Station, Twelve-mile Station, Eleven Mile Barn, Yankee Fork Fisheries, Custer Cemetery, General Custer Mill Site, Jordan Creek, Yankee Fork Gold Dredge, Bonanza City, Dredge Tailings, Sunbeam Store and Sunbeam Dam. Any and all of these sites are within the boundaries of the Salmon-Challis National Forest and are considered part of the Urban Interface because of their relationship to Tourism.

## **Housing Subdivisions:**

There are eleven major subdivisions and the Red Fish Lake Lodge within the SNRA and Custer County boundaries that are of specific concern. These subdivisions are within the Red Tree Treatment Areas. Many have not completed any fuel reduction activities and in some instances the fuel reduction activities are in direct conflict with their building certificates with the SNRA. These subdivisions are all vulnerable for significant loss due to wildfire. Most have only one-way in and out, narrow bridges, and various other obstructions. Because of the drought and the MPB infestation there is significant fuel loading with little, if any, water available for suppression actions. Private Subdivisions and property of concern include but are not limited to the following:

- ❑ Cabin Creek
- ❑ Valley View
- ❑ Fisher Creek
- ❑ Stanley Basin /Buckhorn
- ❑ Iron Creek
- ❑ Goat Creek
- ❑ Crooked Creek
- ❑ Homestead
- ❑ Cow Camp Area
- ❑ Red Fish Lake Lodge
- ❑ West Fork Yankee Fork
- ❑ Ramey Creek

## **Local Fire Response:**

The challenges facing the Custer County Fire Districts are not unlike those facing most rural fire districts throughout the U.S. The need for additional manpower, vehicles, equipment, and training are all common challenges facing rural departments. The Custer County Fire Districts face these challenges and others listed

above. The current response capability, while it could be improved, is adequate for most of the response areas within the county. There are however, significant challenges in dealing with the hazards facing the County in the wildland/urban interface areas within the South Custer, North Custer/Challis, and Stanley Fire Districts.

The largest vulnerability is the access to water for suppression actions. Much of the water used in the wildland/urban interface is either transported in or comes from streams, the Salmon River, and mountain lakes. The Fire Districts indicate an inadequate “tender” capacity. The ongoing drought has lowered natural flows, additionally these flows are not available during the late fall, winter, and early spring due to freezing of natural water supplies.

The second largest vulnerability is access to residences and structures within the wildland/urban interface. Most subdivisions have a single, unimproved roadway leading in and out of the area. These roadways are narrow, clearances are poorly maintained, and in some instances have bridges that are impassable. Responders have a difficult time getting response equipment to the structures to be protected.

A third vulnerability, and one that could be easily addressed, is the lack of an integrated planning, preparedness and response. While this issue is easily addressed, if left unresolved it could be the most serious of all the vulnerabilities. The lack of a coordinated response capability can lead to ineffective protection, potentially resulting in significant property loss and a reduction in public safety.

## Risk Assessment

Table 1 is the evaluation of risk probability versus consequence. It continues to be used as a discussion tool with the Advisory Committee in establishing mitigation action priority. The table compares the identified hazard with the potential threat to life, property, and the environment. The ranking criteria are presented in Table 2.

**Table 1 Risk Ranking**

Identified Hazards	Risk Analysis			
	Life Safety	Property Damage	Environmental Damage	Economic Impact
Wildfires within the Big Lost River Riparian Zone	Medium	High	Medium	Medium
Wildfire Adjacent to Subdivisions within SNRA Boundary	High	High	High	High
Wildfire Adjacent to Challis	Low	Low	Low	Low
Landslide Along the Salmon River/ Highway 75	Low	Low	Medium	Medium
Lack of Integrated Planning, Preparedness and Response	Medium	High	Medium	Medium



**Table 2 Ranking Criteria**

Consequence Criteria		
<b>Life Safety</b>	Low	Injuries limited to the area of effect. < 10
	Medium	Serious injuries >10
	High	Multiple fatalities, critical and serious injuries
<b>Property Damage</b>	Low	Minimal damages
	Medium	Structural damages evident
	High	Loss of structure
<b>Environmental Damages</b>	Low	Minimal impact at area of effect
	Medium	Regional damage
	High	Long-term recovery. Requires significant after action
<b>Economic Impact</b>	Low	Economic impact minimal
	Medium	Loss of business
	High	Regional long term loss

### Summary

Based on the analysis conducted to date as part of the mitigation planning effort the largest risk within the wildland/urban interface areas from wildfires in Custer County is in the SNRA/private subdivision areas. The largest threat to life may well be the recreation sites such as Red Fish Lake, but certainly the highest property loss would occur within the privately owned subdivisions where loss of life could also be significant. Another serious risk area is the Riparian Zone below the Mackay Reservoir along the Big Lost River. The conditions within this area are not as well managed as the SNRA's Red Tree treatment areas. The Federal Government does not have ultimate responsibility for the treatment program and so the County and homeowners may well have to face this risk alone.



## Section 4: Public Participation

The *key to successful implementation* of the goals of the Fire Mitigation Program is involvement from the private property owners in Custer County and the general public who participate in the recreation and tourism within the confines of the County. The public participation process will continue to be conducted in three specific ways.

- 1) Public Information and Data gather previously by the High County RC&D and the SNRA during prevention related activities will continue to provide a basis for public comment..
- 2) Continued involvement of the general public, from the communities served by this process, on the planning and advisory committees.
- 3) A local news article will be published in the Challis Messenger announcing the availability and opportunity to review updates to the Custer County WUI Plan on the State of Idaho Department of Lands Web Site and seeking public input on the Plan by the Advisory Committee.



## Section 5: Mitigation Implementing Actions

The **implementing actions** are a listing of activities that the county agencies and citizens have proposed and agreed upon as those if implemented will reduce the risk in the wildland/urban interface.

- ❑ **Existing actions** - are activities that are currently in progress.
- ❑ **Short-term actions** - are activities that county agencies may implement with existing resources and authorities within one to two years.
- ❑ **Long-term actions** - may require new or additional resources or authorities, and may take between one and five years to implement.
- ❑ **Ongoing actions** – actions that have, or will begin as part of the mitigation process that will be ongoing over the course of the five-year planning window.

### Existing Implementing Actions

#### 1. Revision of the Custer County Emergency Operations Plan into the NIMS format.

Responsible Individual: Doug Hammond  
 Due Date: November 2005  
 Resources: BHS Planning Grant  
 Status: Plan is being reviewed and updated in 2008.

#### 2. Installation of static water supply tanks in Stanley.

Responsible Individual: Andy Gunderson  
 Due Date:  
 Resources: Fire District Funding  
 Status: Two tank systems were installed. Additional Funding for 5 more tank systems was applied for unsuccessfully in 2004.

#### 3. SNRA Red Tree Reduction Project.

Responsible Individual: Sawtooth National Forest  
 Due Date:  
 Resources: Forest Service Funding  
 Status: Continue more Red Tree reduction projects

#### 4. Fuel Reduction Projects in the Iron Creek, Crooked Creek, Cow Camp, Fisher Creek, and Buckhorn Subdivisions. Project includes thinning, removal and replanting of dead lodgepole pine.

Responsible Individual: Homeowners Associations  
 Due Date:  
 Resources: Community Grants through Sawtooth National Forest  
 Status:

#### 5. Rural Addressing of Custer County.

Responsible Individual: Chris James  
 Due Date: December 2004

Resources: RC&D Managed BLM Grant  
 Status: Addresses are currently being assigned using new GIS Software.

6. Mechanical and prescribed burning to conduct fuels reduction in the dead and dying stands of trees northeast of Lower Stanley, around the Camp Bradley Boy Scout Camp, the Cape Horn Power Line, ranch, and egress/ingress roads. The SCF is also taking action to salvage dead and dying trees in Harden Creek and reducing fuels in the municipal watershed for Challis.

Responsible Individual: John Fowler  
 Due Date: Begin Fall 2004  
 Resources: Salmon-Challis Forest Service Funding  
 Status: Projects underway.

#### 7. Procurement of new fire apparatus in South and North Custer Fire Districts.

Responsible Individual: District Fire Chiefs  
 Due Date: Summer 2004  
 Resources: FEMA Assistance to Firefighters Grant  
 Status: The South Custer and Mackay Fire Departments were both successful in obtaining grant funding to procure fire engines. Both Engines have arrived and are in service.

### Short Term Actions

Responsible Individual: Custer County Wildland/Urban Interface Advisory Committee

#### Develop Partnerships:

1. Establish subcommittees to investigate and lead the implementation of mitigation projects.

**Status: None to Report**

2. Identify all organizations within Custer County that have programs or interests in wildland/urban interface fire mitigation including private business and other joint planning groups and investigate if common issues are being addressed. Invite them to assist in the implementation mitigation projects.

**Status: None to Report**

3. Develop, approve and promote Fire Protection Agreements and partnerships to clarify roles and responsibilities and to provide for fire mitigation activities and suppression preparedness.

**Status:** The South Custer and Mackay Fire Departments have merged into a single operation.

4. Develop partnerships with Water Districts to improve the water storage facilities and delivery capabilities in development within and outside of Fire Protection Districts.

**Status: None to Report**

5. Integrate requirements for water drafting into Annual Operating Plans developed between the Fire Districts and the Federal Agencies.

**Status: None to Report**

6. Revise the Hazard/Vulnerability Analysis to include a definition of the WUI Zone, develop maps depicting the zones, analyze slope and vegetation.

**Status:** Working with BLM and the Custer County LEPC to identify funding for this activity.

### Education and Training:

1. Provide training for Advisory Committee members on current and developing issues related to the wildland/urban interface fire hazards loss reduction field.

**Status:           None to Report**

2. Develop a brochure that addresses fire and relating watershed issues in the wildland/urban interface that can be used by the general public and private businesses.

**Status:           None to Report**

3. Encourage the development of unifying organizations to ensure communications and dissemination of the wildland/urban interface mitigation information such as planned programs and results from mitigation actions.

**Status:           None to Report**

4. Develop the capability to apply for grant funding for the implementation of mitigation actions through training of grant writers and the monitoring of available grant opportunities.

**Status:           The South Custer Fire District has contacted for Grant Writing Services. Other Fire Districts are applying for grants using existing resources.**

5. Conduct joint training and exercises between the Fire Districts, the Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, and SNRA to improve communications and coordination during fire suppression.

**Status:           In Progress with some joint training already accomplished**

6. Provide public education of the need to improve water storage and distribution capacity within the County including improved mapping of existing water storage.

**Status:           None to Report**

7. Improve knowledge of causes and effects of landslides resulting from wildfires including hazards vulnerabilities, and risks to life and property in hazard prone areas.

**Status:           None to Report**

8. Enhance outreach and education programs aimed at interface fire hazards through cooperation with existing programs within the Forest Service, BLM, and State Department of Lands.

**Status:           None to Report**

#### **Data Collection:**

1. Working within the partnerships created above, gather information and propose the development of building codes and a permit process to ensure that defensible space has been properly planned for in new construction.

**Status:           The Sawtooth Valley Rural Fire District has submitted a WUI Code for adoption by the County Commission.**

2. As part of the Rural Addressing Project, identify critical facilities, such as wireless communications repeaters and bridges used for evacuation, within the interface areas at risk from wildfire events.

**Status:           In Progress**

3. Assess bridges and roadways for their ability to support fire apparatus ingress and egress.

**Status:           None to Report**

4. Map and evaluate the landslide prone areas of the county for possible land movements.

**Status:** Done

#### **Specific Implementing Actions Projects:**

1. Implement Section 7 of the Wildland/Urban Interface Fire Mitigation Plan through Plan adoption and Advisory Committee establishment.

**Status:** None to Report

2. Implement re-vegetation programs in landslide areas affected by previous wildfires.

**Status:** None to Report

3. Develop and disseminate maps showing the fire hazard to help in the education and preparedness of the community. Use the GIS layers developed as part of the Rural Addressing Project.

**Status:** None to Report

4. Complete the Rural Addressing Project.

**Status:** Project 75% Complete.

- 5.. Improve fire protection ratings in, the City of Challis, and North Custer Fire District through the construction of a new fire station and improvements in the water storage and delivery infrastructure such as dry hydrants, portable tankers, underground, draft capable, tanks, private property access, and other required fire fighting equipment.

**Status:** A new fire station has been built for Mackay and South Custer combined fire departments. Planning stages for new fire house in Challis.

6. Continue to assist homeowner associations to apply for grants for the purposes of reducing fuel loading and improvements in fire protection infrastructure.

**Status:** None to Report

7. Conduct workshops for public and private sector organizations to raise awareness of mitigation activities and programs.

**Status:** None to Report

8. Place the Custer County Wildland/Urban Interface Fire Mitigation Plan on the County Web Site.

**Status:** In Progress

9. Implement the SNRA Community Evacuation Plan.

**Status:** None to Report

10. Develop Evacuation Plans for sites along the Custer Motorway Adventure Road including the historical sites along the Yankee Fork of the Salmon River.

**Status:** None to Report

11. Plan and/or implement fuels reduction projects in the North Fork of the Big Lost River, Sawmill Canyon, the East Fork of the Salmon River, Squaw/Kinnickinic Creeks, Poverty Flats and in the municipal watersheds of Challis and Mackay.

**Status:** The Salmon Challis Forest is working on development of fuels reduction projects in proximity to the municipal watershed for Mackay and Garden Creek Fuels Reduction Project (Challis Municipal Watershed) is being implemented. The other projects are in the planning stage by the SCF, SNRA and BLM – Challis Field Office.

#### **Long Term and Ongoing Actions**



Responsible Individual: Custer County Wildland/Urban Interface Advisory Committee

#### **Establish Partnerships:**

1. Coordinate the maintenance of emergency transportation routes through communications with the County Interagency Transportation Working Group and neighboring jurisdictions.  
**Status:           None to Report**
2. Work with community planning organizations and other neighborhood groups to establish Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT).  
**Status:           None to Report**
3. Develop Quick Response Units for medical response in sparsely populated areas.  
**Status:           None to Report**
4. Develop Memoranda of Understanding with existing Emergency Medical Services in the County to increase coverage.  
**Status:           None to Report**

#### **Funding Needs/Support:**

1. Purchase and equip a mobile command unit to improve emergency response communications between public agencies, response entities, and the County Emergency Operations Center.  
**Status:           None to Report**
2. Hire a County Fire Prevention Officer to oversee public education programs.  
**Status:           None to Report**
3. Develop a structured Fire Prevention Education Program based on the community hazards.  
**Status:           None to Report**
4. Develop and equipment additional Emergency Medical Services Organizations in areas not covered.  
**Status:           None to Report**
5. Rural Fire Departments need to upgrade their rural water supplies and capabilities. This would include portable pumps, tankers and pumps for filling them, drop tanks and PPEs.  
**Status:           Some is done and still in progress elsewhere.**

#### **Education and Training**

1. Educate private property owners on limitations of physical infrastructure and dangers associated with them following wildfire events.  
**Status:           None to Report**
2. Develop a process to encourage private property owners to upgrade their bridges and roadways to support ingress and egress of fire apparatus.  
**Status:           None to Report**
3. Encourage individual and family preparedness through public education projects such as safety fairs and fire prevention month.  
**Status:           None to Report**
4. Develop or enhance existing outreach materials to include focus on protecting natural ecosystems and watersheds as a mitigation activity.  
**Status:           None to Report**

5. Improve training for existing Emergency Medical Services.

**Status:**           **None to Report**

**Data Collection:**

1. Conduct risk analysis incorporating data and hazard mapping using GIS technology to identify vulnerable sites and to further assist in the prioritization of mitigation activities.

**Status:**           **None to Report**

2. Identify watersheds and develop a watershed protection program.

**Status:**           Salmon Challis Forest is working with the municipalities on this project and has defined some fuel reduction projects that are proximity to municipal watersheds. Implementation of Fuels Reduction in the municipal watershed for Challis has been initiated.

**Specific Implementation Projects:**

1. Employ mechanical thinning and prescribe burning in Red Tree Areas.

**Status:**           SNRA has begun this process and has implemented numerous Red Tree projects and will continue into the future.

2. Clear trimmings, trees, brush, and other debris completely from sites when performing routine maintenance and landscaping to reduce fire risk

**Status:**           **None to Report**

3. Expand Fire Districts to provide fire protection to residences within the County.

**Status:**           **None to Report**

4. Plan and/or implement Fuels Reduction Projects in the municipal watershed for Mackay (Rio Grande, Taylor, Cliff, Black Daisy and Alder Creeks) as well as the Big Hill area, Morgan Summit Salvage, Cape Horn Meadows, Big Gulch, Dead Cat, Mosquito Lake, Copper Basin Front, Twin Bridges, Harden Road, North fork of the Big Lost, Sulfur/Morgan, Upper Yankee Fork, and around recreation residences, resorts and organization camps on the SNRA. These projects are in or adjacent to municipal watersheds, in the response to dying stands of trees, or are near subdivisions and other private lands.

**Status:**           SCF and SNRA are working to develop funding for these projects.

**Ongoing Actions:**

1. Encourage single-family residences to have fire plans and practice evacuation routes.

**Status:**           **None to Report**

2. Encourage fire inspections in residential areas by fire departments to increase awareness and establish relationships between homeowners and firefighters.

**Status:**           **None to Report**

3. Continue the development of adult and child education programs and incorporate them into the public libraries, community service groups, the media, and other civic forums.

**Status:**           **None to Report**

4. Continue to update and improve the SNRA Community Evacuation Plan.

**Status:**           **None to Report**

5. Improve Fire District capabilities through an aggressive program focusing on resources acquisition, training, and coordination.

**Status:** The South Custer and Mackay Fire Departments are combining resources to improve fire protection in their respective jurisdictions.

## **Section 6: Economic Analysis**

See the Custer County Wildland Urban Interface Plan 2004 for Additional Information



## Section 7: Plan Maintenance

The Plan maintenance process includes a schedule for monitoring and evaluating the programmatic outcomes established in the Plan annually and producing a Plan revision every five years. This section describes how the county will integrate public participation throughout the Plan maintenance process.

### Formal Review Process

The Plan has been evaluated as required for 2005 to determine the effectiveness of programs, and to reflect changes that may affect mitigation priorities. The evaluation process included updates to the annual schedule and timeline, updates on mitigation implementation actions, and identified the local agencies and organizations participating in Plan evaluation. The Director, Custer County Emergency Management as project facilitator was responsible for contacting the Wildland/Urban Mitigation Advisory Committee members and organizing the annual review. Group members continue to be responsible for monitoring and evaluating the progress of the mitigation strategies in the Plan.

The Committee has reviewed the goals and action items in relationship to changing situations in the county, as well as changes in State or Federal policy, and to ensure they are addressing current and expected conditions. The Committee also reviewed the risk assessment portion of the Plan and added updated available data. The coordinating organizations responsible for the various action items provided updated reports on the status of their projects, the success of various implementation processes, difficulties encountered, success of coordination efforts, and which strategies should be revised or removed.

Whisper Mountain Professional Services, Inc was contracted to review and update the Plan by the Custer County Emergency Management Director. Once the Plan is adopted by the County Board of Commissioners the Committee will notify all holders of the county plan and private property owners that an update is available. The updated plan will be submitted to the State Wildfire Mitigation Officer and the Federal Emergency Management Agency for review.

### Continued Public Involvement

Custer County is dedicated to involving the public directly in review and updates of the Plan. The Committee is responsible for the annual review and update of the plan. The public will also have the opportunity to provide input into Plan revisions and updates as described in Section 4. Copies of the Plan will be catalogued and kept at all of the appropriate agencies in the county. The existence and location of these copies will be publicized in the local newspaper as required in Section 4.

Rather than holding a public meeting after the annual evaluation by the Committee and article will be published in the Challis Messenger announcing that the Updated Plan is available for review and can be found online at the Department of Lands Website and Custer County Website. This online review will provide the public a virtual forum where they can express concerns, opinions, or new alternatives that can then be included in the next Plan Update.

